

Remarks

The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present U.S. Patent application as amended herein. Claims 2, 3, 5-8, 11, 13, 15, 16-19, and 22 have been amended. Claims 1, 12, 14, and 23-25 have been cancelled without prejudice. No claims have been added or withdrawn. Claims 26-30 have been allowed. Thus, claims 2-11, 13, 15-22, and 26-30.

Claim Rejections § 103

Claims 1-4, 6, 8-13, 15, and 17-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,699,519 issued to Shiobara (*Shiobara*) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,999,541 issued to Hinckey et al. (*Hinckey*). Claims 1, 12, 23, and 24 have been cancelled and, therefore, the rejection of claims 1, 12, 23, and 24 is moot. For at least the reasons set forth below, the Applicant submits that claims 2-4, 6, 8-11, 13, 15, and 17-22 are patentable over a combination of *Shiobara* and *Hinckey*.

The Office action objected to claims 5 and 16 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 5 and 16 have been amended to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Thus, the Applicant respectfully submits that claims 5 and 16 are allowable.

Claims 2-4 and 6-11 depend directly or indirectly from claim 5. Similarly, claims 13, 15, and 17-22 depend directly or indirectly from claim 16. For at least the reason that

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dependent claims include the limitations of the claims from which they depend, the Applicant submits that claims 2-4, 6-11, 13, 15, and 17-22 are patentable over *Shiobara* in view of *Hinchey*.

Conclusion

The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone if such contact would further the examination of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,
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